

What motivates students to work for AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA

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<p>In this work, the motivation level of a student run volunteer organization AIESEC is studied. The study is composed from three main parts; theories about motivation, analyzing the survey results and formulating suggestions for future improvement.</p> <p>AIESEC is an international very large organization with preventatives in numerous countries. Therefore a quantitative approach is necessary. To be more specific, the focus group in this work is AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA Local Committee. The headquarters are located in Helsinki Finland, Pasila campus. The total number of member in this group is 20.</p> <p>The main data collection tool is a survey, which is conducted inside AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. The survey includes eight questions about members' feelings about the level of motivation graded from 1 to 5 and two "free word" written feedback type questions.</p> <p>The results show the level of motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA to be fairly good, slightly above average of 3,0. They clearly point out that the main problem in motivation is the lack of proper feedback for accomplishments. However, the results also show a very high satisfaction to the learning opportunities and challenges provided by the organization.</p> <p>Suggestions for improving motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA were formulated based on the results and analysis. The main issue is to greatly improve the feedback both ways inside the organization. This should increase the members trust in the organization leadership and increase their feeling of accomplishment. This could be done in form of individual feedback sessions. Moreover, it is suggested that the level of motivation should be monitored yearly to have more information on the follow-up strategy modifications.</p>	
Key words motivation, volunteer, AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA	

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1 Introduction

No company can be successful without the right employees working behind the scenes. The same can be said for organizations that rely upon volunteers. And it is the role of any manager to keep volunteers motivated to ensure they are willing to continue. In general, satisfied workers are more productive.

Keeping workers motivated and productive, especially volunteers, often requires a large amount of effort. Groups of volunteers might all perform similar tasks, but each person is an individual and what motivates one might not motivate another. People working for a volunteer organization can often have issues preventing them from being active members. Since they do not get any monetary compensation for their work, they do not feel obligated to work efficiently. Moreover, many people have compelling/mandatory activities such as part-time work and studies which, of course, overrule any less important things.

There are many theories about how to keep up motivation in team, but there are no clear instructions or practical research studies explaining what are the most efficient ways, especially for volunteer organization. Motivation is usually the main reason for high retention rate in any company. This is especially true now when young people change jobs more often and look for faster career growth. Reasons why people change employing organizations more often nowadays are, e.g., change of career, level of salary and lack of career opportunities.

This topic was chosen because it is very important nowadays in Human Resource (HR) management. Moreover, the author is interested to find out the way how to deal with modern realities in HR. This can be accomplished by studying member motivation of volunteer organization, in this case AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. This document describes a detailed plan how to realize this study.

The two main objectives of this thesis are to unearth the level of motivation in voluntary organization AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and then formulate potentially efficient suggestions which can be used to further improve the motivation. In other words, this thesis project will be mainly working with (student) member's motivation in a voluntary organization (AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA). The first goal is to find the current level of motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. The second goal is to create ideas on how to improve the level of motivation. In other words, the main research question in this work is as follows: "What motivates students to work for AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA?"

The first goal will be reached by collecting data about the level of overall motivation and on more detailed aspects of it. This data is composed of a survey and feedback. The results will be collected and analyzed. The second goal is then achieved by using the analysis together with literature to try to find new ways to improve the motivation in the organization.

After the first chapter of introduction, the document describes the theories used in this work in the second chapter. The third chapter explains the scope, methodology and results of this work. In fourth chapter, the results are being discussed, analyzed and suggestions of improvements made. The fifth chapter contains the conclusions. The bibliography and attachments are located in the end of the thesis.

2 Theories about human behavior

The main theories deemed useful for this work are listed below. The bullet points show the main idea that has been planned to implement based on the theory. Data can be collected and/or observations made before and after the implementation to compare the effectiveness of the method.

In the scope of this work, the following two theories were picked to help in the analysis of the results and to formulate a plan to counteract possible negative aspects in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA motivation:

2.1 Volunteerism and Human Behavior Theory

This theory actually includes a bunch of branches of various natures. Human Behavior Theory is a common nominator for these ideas. The “sub-theories” or “tools” include topics such as Conflict Theory, Empowerment Theory, Social Learning Theory and few others. In general it can be said that these theories are designed to explain and guide observed patterns in human behavior. These tools can be used to interpret human behavior. Moreover, they can be used to formulate strategies and interventions. Obviously, as human behavior is very complicated, all theories can be under debate and modified to explain the same phenomena in a different ways. However, the tools provided here offer a good starting point for the analysis done in this work. (Sherr 2008)

2.2 Conflict Theory

To emphasize a few of the tools spoken about above, conflict theory states that typically stability and harmonious functioning are unusual between normal interactions human systems. Different minds collide, giving birth debate and conflict. This feels very natural from the authors’ point of view and from personal experience.



Figure 1. Conflict between groups is a natural state in the Conflict theory. There are often conflicts between interests inside AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA that result to power struggles. (Wax 2013)

Different interest groups compete for ways to advance towards their goals. The same can be said on individual level. Conflict often rises when competition for an advance is at stake. Healthy level of competition can have a positive effect on motivation and performance. Unhealthy level on the other hand can result unnecessary stress and non-productive struggle. (Sherr 2008)

2.3 Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory is similar to conflict theory. However, the idea is to gain the mastery over the affairs of the organization. Empowerment theory focuses to create stratification through inequalities such as hierarchy and power.

Conflict and Empowerment theory both share the belief that change can only happen when there are enough people to create collective action. The collective action must arise from living experiences shared by individuals who are willing to work together to address a common problem. (Sherr 2008)

2.4 Systems Theory

The theory, considered at least somewhat opposite to the two previous ones is the systems theory, and it is worth mentioning for the sake of contrast. As the name of the theory suggests, individuals, groups and societies are considered as human systems. By definition, a human system has boundaries defined in some manner. This could be, e.g., a Local AIESEC Committee with its' own social structure, culture and feeling of belong. However, the systems are also sub-systems of a larger system that again has its boundaries, for example AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA Local Committee is a sub-system of AIESEC in Finland and AIESEC in Finland is subsystem of AIESEC International. Individual area made of biological systems, emotional systems, etc. Perhaps the main point is that these systems interact in away allowing the individual or group to coexist with the surrounding environment.

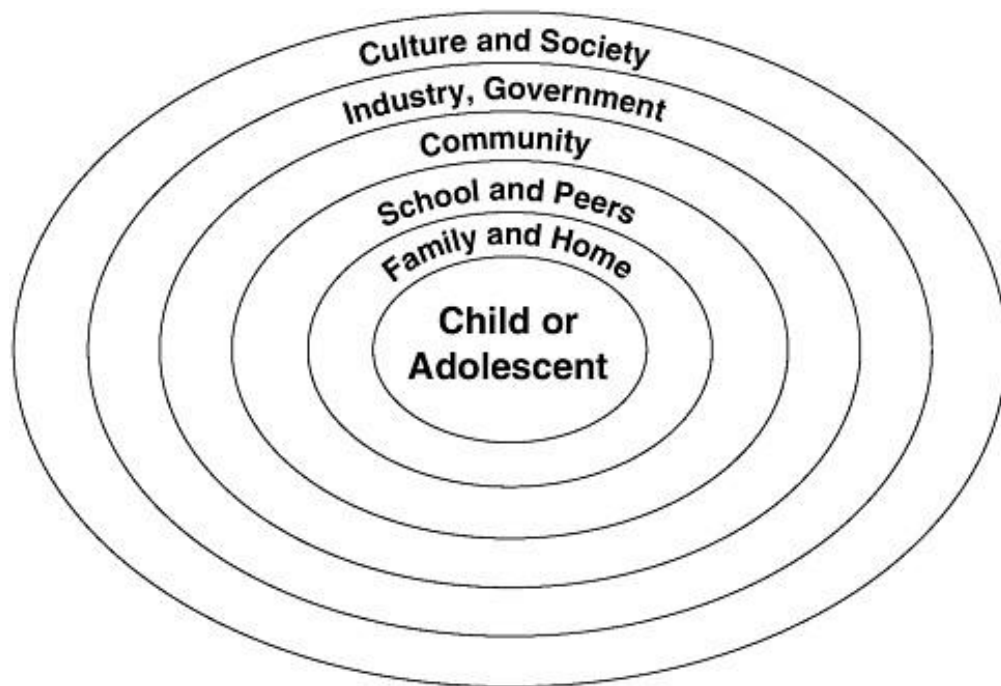


Figure 2. An illustration of systems and subsystems hierarchy. (CICRCL 2003)

Systems theory aims to a “goodness of fit” where transactions are sufficient and reciprocal, volunteerism being an example. Transactions occur between different systems. Volunteers learn new things and feel helpful and needed. People receiving the help

gain benefit from the services and self-esteem from knowing they are being cared about. Volunteerism can change the views of people for one another, bringing different systems (e.g., cultures as in case of AIESEC) together. Thus, volunteerism creates “goodness of fit” through greater diversity of interaction. (Sherr 2008)

2.5 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory focuses on thoughts emotions and stresses that influence learned behaviors. People can learn new behavior or change their current behavior by observing others. This kind of process is visible in most of teaching – learning conditions, leader – subject conditions and in peer groups. When an individual executes a behavior, often in response the observers imitate this behavior and repeat it. For the observers, the former behavior model might be strengthened or weakened depending on the earlier behavior model. More people observe and then engage in response behaviors, more so called “self-efficacy” is built. This means the confidence people gain through ability to master an activity. (Sherr 2008)

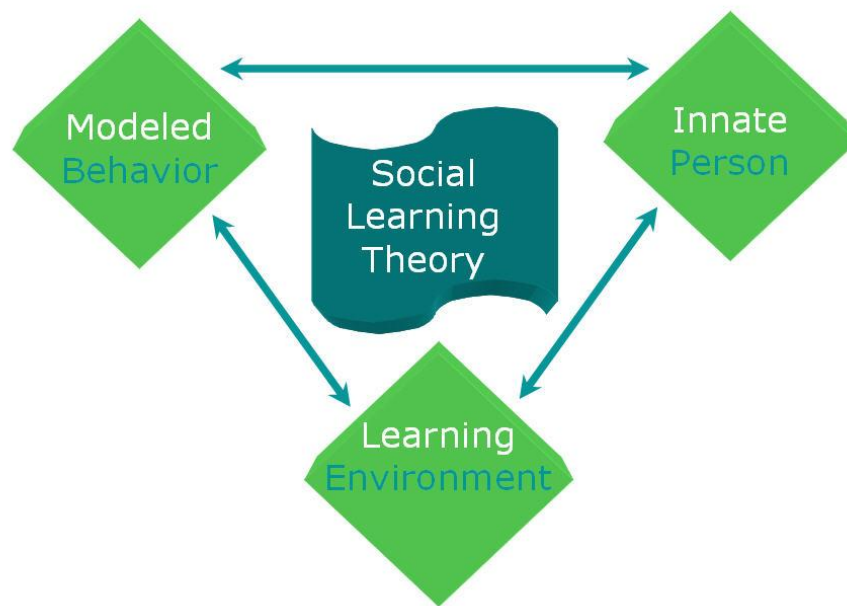
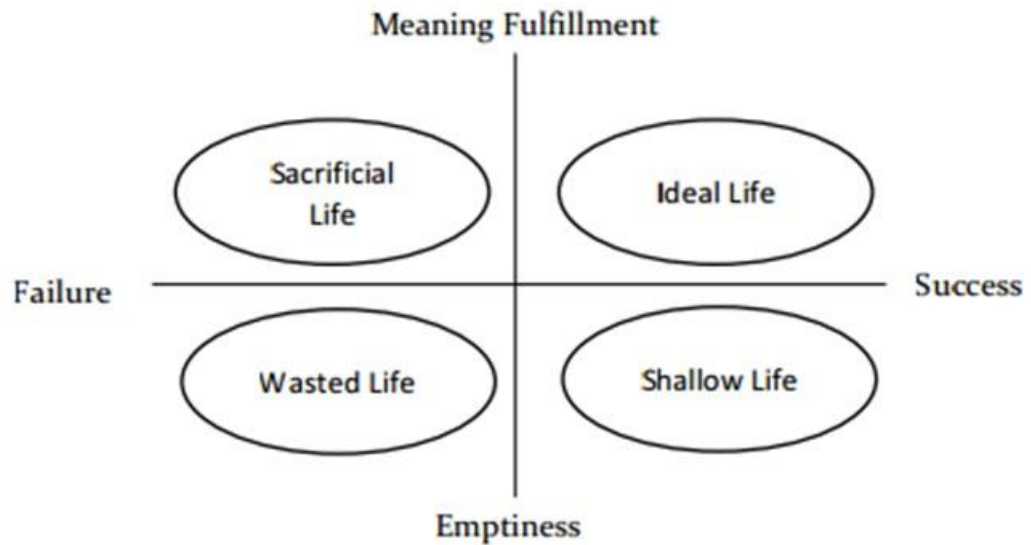


Figure 3. Illustration of the patterns of the social learning theory. Person affects the behavior and learning environment which then affect the person and each other. (University of Alabama, Online Learning Laboratory)

For AIESECers, being a relatively tight group, social learning is strong and in can be seen, in the opinion of the author, in most AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA groups developing similar behavioral patterns and cultures.

2.6 Positive Psychology Theory

Positive psychologists seek “to find and nurture genius and talent” and “to make normal life more fulfilling”, rather than merely “treating mental illness.” This can be stated in general about the positive psychology theory. It seeks to find ways to encourage and invent techniques to understand emotionally fulfilling, positive and creative human behavioral stand points. It reflects on finding “a good life” state using persons strengths to produce happiness. (Argyle 2001)



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Figure 4. The goal of the positive psychology theory is a happy fulfilling life. (Wong 2013)

2.7 The Flow – path to happiness

From the many aspects and parts describing the positive psychology theory, the Flow is best suited for the purposes of the context of this work. It is a sub-theory for the “the good life”, also using the concept of the “self-efficacy” (see chapter about Social Learning Theory earlier) which refers to belief that the ability to accomplish a task is a function of personal effort. The flow is defined by concepts such as “intense concentration”, feeling of being perfectly challenged” (meaning the task is neither boring nor overwhelming) and “time is flying”. (Csikszentmihalyi 1990)

The main focus of flow is reward, whether this rewards comes in form of achieving a goal or learning new things. The balance of the flow for an individual arises from the skill level. A person of professional level requires a larger, harder task to be positively challenged than a person with less experience, whom then needs simpler tasks to move ahead and learn. When the flow is not achieved, e.g., unskilled person receives a too demanding task; the result is of the anxiety and stress. In comparison, a highly skilled

person performing a task far too simple will quickly get bored. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

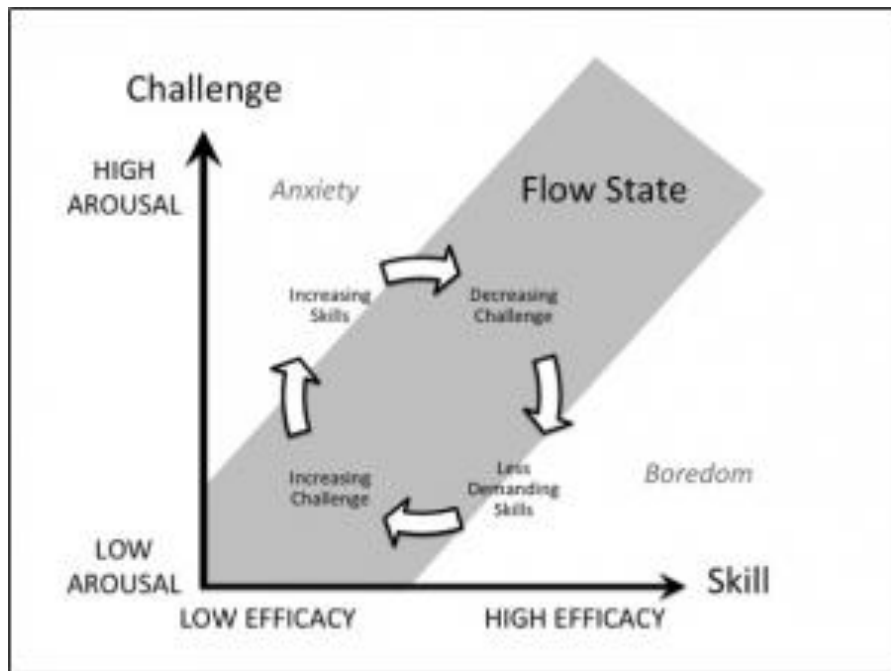


Figure 5. With right balance between skill and challenge the flow can be achieved. (Rutledge 2012)

Stress can be also “positive” (so called eustress by Hans Selye) depending on how a person can handle a stressful situation, e.g., by feeling meaning, hope or vigor. However, chronic stress can create harmful effects best described as “wear and tear”. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

Csikszentmihalyi identified nine indicator elements of flow:

1. Clear goals exist every step of the way
2. **Immediate feedback guides one's action**
3. There is a balance between challenges and abilities
4. Action and awareness are merged
5. Distractions are excluded from consciousness
6. Failure is not worrisome
7. Self-consciousness disappears

8. Sense of time is distorted

9. The activity becomes "autotelic" (an end in itself, done for its own sake)

(Csikszentmihalyi 1990)

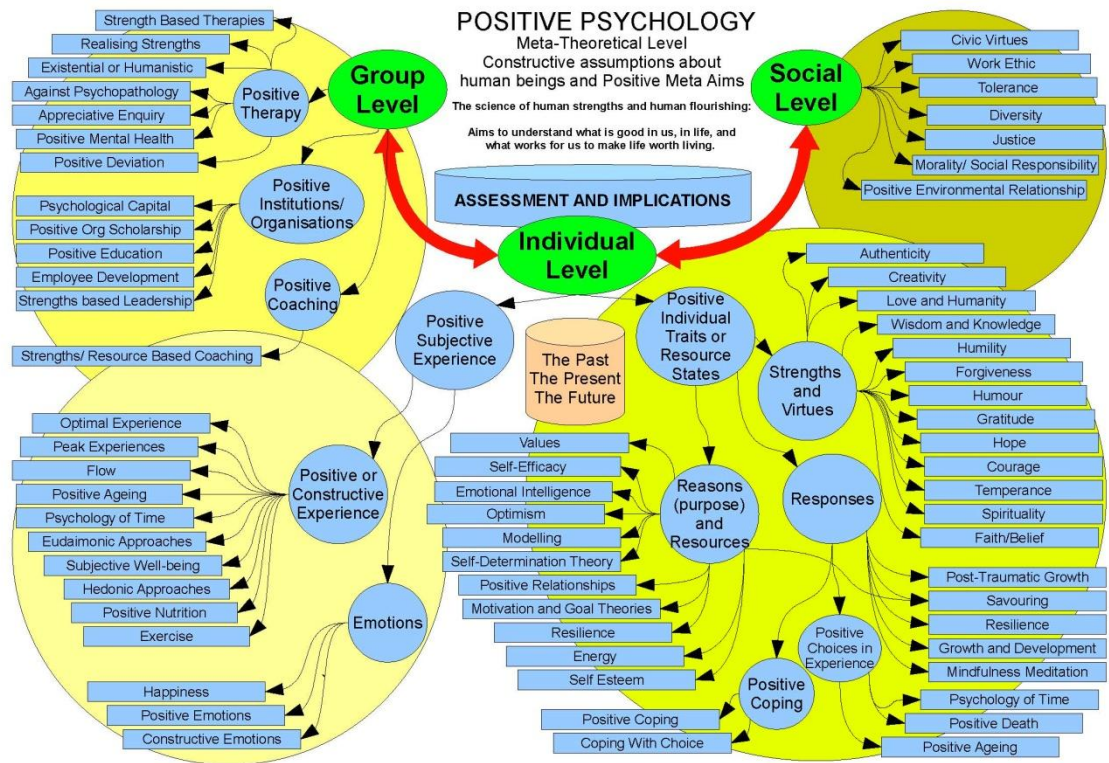


Figure 6. Highly detailed image of the ideas of positive psychology theory. The most emphasis on this work should be on, e.g., Positive Coaching, Positive, Subject Experience and Strengths and Virtues. (Tillier 2012)

From this, especially the second point about feedback will be emphasized later in the chapter about the results. Also the first, the third and the sixth point are considered. The Positive Psychology Theory sub-section flow gives a clear guideline, in the authors opinion, on how an organization should use its' resources effectively. I.e., the skill level or a member of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA should be well defined, the tasks provided should reflect this level and provide a real opportunity for learning and most importantly, immediate feedback should be given to ensure the correct decisions have been

made. As the sixth point above states, failure is not worrisome, but it does not mean that it should be encouraged. (Csikszentmihalyi 1990)

3 Scope, methodology and results of the research

This chapter describes the scope of this work. I.e., it gives the limits inside which the work has been carried out fitting both the requirements of the assignment and the amount of necessary collected data. Furthermore, the methodology applied in the case of this scope has been introduced and briefly explained. Finally, the results of the research are presented.

3.1 Scope and methodology

In order to formulate useful suggestions to improve motivation, it is important to fully understand, what the necessary information that has to be collected is. The scope of this work can be broken down into a basic question: “What motivates students to work for AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA?” Furthermore, an additional question can be: “How to keep motivation in a voluntary organization?”

To answer these questions, it is necessary to gather enough data and experience on the field. The main method for the data collection is surveys. The surveys must be implemented so that the acquired data will answer the questions. Furthermore, experience based on own observations and notes will further reinforce the findings. I.e., surveys will be used to directly inquire the different general motivational variables from the members of the organization and observations, made by the author, are additional. This amount of data together with known theory should be sufficient to answer the research questions in satisfactory manner. Survey includes information about gender of responders and their working time in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. Survey questions have been divided in three different groups. First group has general questions about motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. Second group includes questions about overall appreciation at work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. Third group includes questions to analyze challenge at work place in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA.

The survey questions have a range from 1 to 5, where option 1 means totally disagree and option 5 totally agree. Thus it can be pre-stated, for example, that if the results give an average level of motivation to be less than 3, the motivation should be improved. The same goes also for the average satisfaction for the level of feedback, just to name another example. Of course, it is understood that five options will give highly discrete data, but it should be sufficient in this context. Moreover, too many options are sometimes harder for the subject to answer.

Questions groups

The survey questions have been organized into three groups. This is to have better control over the collected data. The groups are as follows:

General questions:

- The overall motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA is good
- The overall motivation in my AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA team is good

Appreciation questions:

- I feel I get enough support from other AIESECers
- I feel I get enough feedback for my work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA

Challenge questions:

- I have enough positive challenge in my work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA
- There are plenty of opportunities for learning in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA

The survey also includes feedback for member's own ideas of keeping them motivated. Furthermore, I feel it to be of great use to gather data on how people would react to my personal ideas of improvement. The survey can be found in the end of this work as attachment 1.

Using quantitative research

A quantitative research is best suited for collecting information from large groups of people. This method of research was chosen to collect empirical data and to make it suitable for analyzing. When the whole target group (e.g., population of Finland or AIESEC International) is very large, it is virtually impossible to gather data throughout

the whole body. The amount of required work distributing the survey would be unreasonable, and the analysis of the vast amount of data would require enormous amount of time. Therefore, it is often best to select a small group of subjects inside the whole target group to gain a good approximation of the desired variables. It obviously has to be assumed that the small selected group represents the whole body well enough. (Nardi 2013; Bell 2005)

For the reason described above (due to the high amount of members in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA), it is reasonable to limit the group and area of study inside this organization. Therefore, the amount of people under study is approximately 20 persons. This amount of people is easier to track in detail. However, it must be pointed out that 20 persons is not a high amount with contrast to statistics. Therefore, there is of course a margin of error in the results. This does not mean that the conclusions drawn from the results would be wrong. It means that the numbers give a good estimation of the situation. This also does not mean that the results would be wrong by definition, but that with much larger group of subjects the suggested methods would be higher in probability to succeed.

Selection of theories

As mentioned, the amount of theories on motivation is large. The task of the author is then to find the best suitable theory or theories and limit the work to these. Optionally, some best aspects could be picked from many theories and combined into one as seen fit. Since this work concentrates on a voluntary organization mostly composed of students, it is reasonable to limit to motivational theories regarding voluntary work and young people. The main research method is quantitative survey. Thus, theories on composing, implementing and analyzing such procedures are needed.

The theories in chapter two were selected due to their high level of similarity compared to the research questions and the target group in this work. The main issue in this research is motivation, which shaped the list of theories as it is. Moreover, the theories

either reflect a general idea upon any target group or specifically volunteer organizations, from which the latter is related this work.

3.2 Results of the survey

In this chapter, the results of this work are presented. They are also discussed with respect to the chosen theories. The goal is to formulate a comprehensible package of information to draw the conclusions from. Here it must be also stated that from this point, word “motivation” means the AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA motivation in general. “Team motivation” will be separately used when it is meant.

General results – question averages

The gender distribution was 6 of men and 14 of women the total number of answers being 20. The range of working time in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was from 1 month to more than 2 years between the subjects. Work positions have been: team member (10 people), team leader (4 people), executive board (5 people) and board (1 person).

The average numbers and deviations calculated from the survey questions are as follows (see Attachment 2 for details):

- 1) The overall motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA is good
Average: 3,5
- 2) I feel I get enough support from other AIESECers
Average: 3,85
- 3) I have enough positive challenge in my work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA
Average: 4,2
- 4) The overall motivation in my AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA team is good
Average : 3,65
- 5) I feel I get enough feedback for my work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA
Average: 2,85
- 6) There are plenty of opportunities for learning in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA
Average: 4,45

Survey showcased level of motivation which in average was 3,5 from 1 to 5. This means that level of motivation in local committee is satisfactory. However, there is much room for improvement. Especially in a voluntary organization, it is important to have as high level of motivation as possible. Since the volunteers do not receive any monetary compensation, they need other reasons to be able to work efficiently.

Highest result was for learning environment in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA 4,45 from 5. It is important to provide in volunteer organizations space to learn for members. If members see that there are opportunities to learn and develop themselves it keeps their motivation level higher. The correlation between challenges and learning is clearly visible. Challenge at work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA makes people learn more and develop themselves.

Thus, the survey made it clear that there are enough positive challenges and opportunities for learning in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. This can be clearly seen in figure 7. Both values are well above average. People seem to be happy in general for the tasks they are given. From the authors' point of view, most people manage their assigned tasks and positions quite well. From the point of view of the Flow theory, this is the first step towards achieving a positive environment for the work in the AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA voluntary organization. I.e., the first part of the flow seems to be a success.

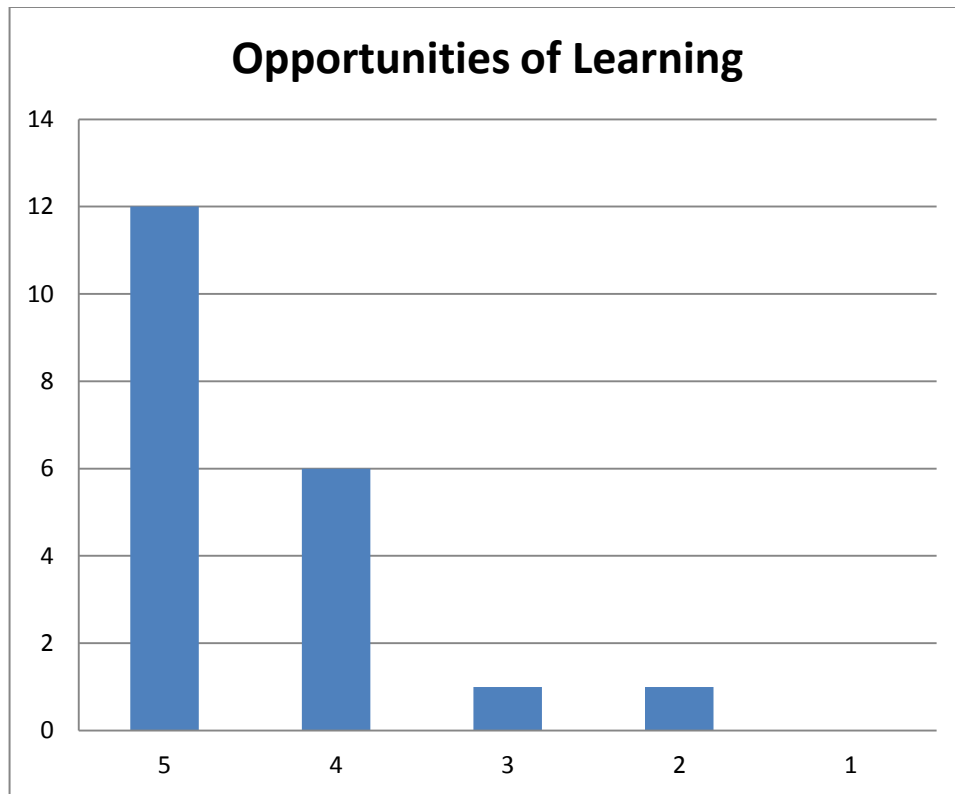


Figure 7. A column diagram, which shows the distribution of answers for opportunities of learning. It can be clearly seen that the distribution is on the high level side.

From the previous two slightly contradiction observations we now get to perhaps the bottom of the matter: Why the level of positive challenge is so highly graded but the motivation in general is only roughly on average level? The reason is clearly, that level of support and providing feedback is not good enough. Not providing objective feedback for members work made them not realize their development, achievements and mistakes. This de-motivates them to make more contribution to their work and in average understand the purpose of their work and personal development. From this point the survey clearly reflects the disruption of the Flow described in the Theoretical chapter. Feedback is a part of recognition for work and not implementing it can affect motivation negatively.

Detailed analysis – correlations between datasets

More detailed analysis of the gathered data was also performed. This might help to generate more accurate analysis and especially more improved methods to further in-

crease motivation. For example, gender might have an effect on motivation level. Also, level of challenge could be expected to have a high correlation with motivation. These will be analyzed below.

Gender Effects

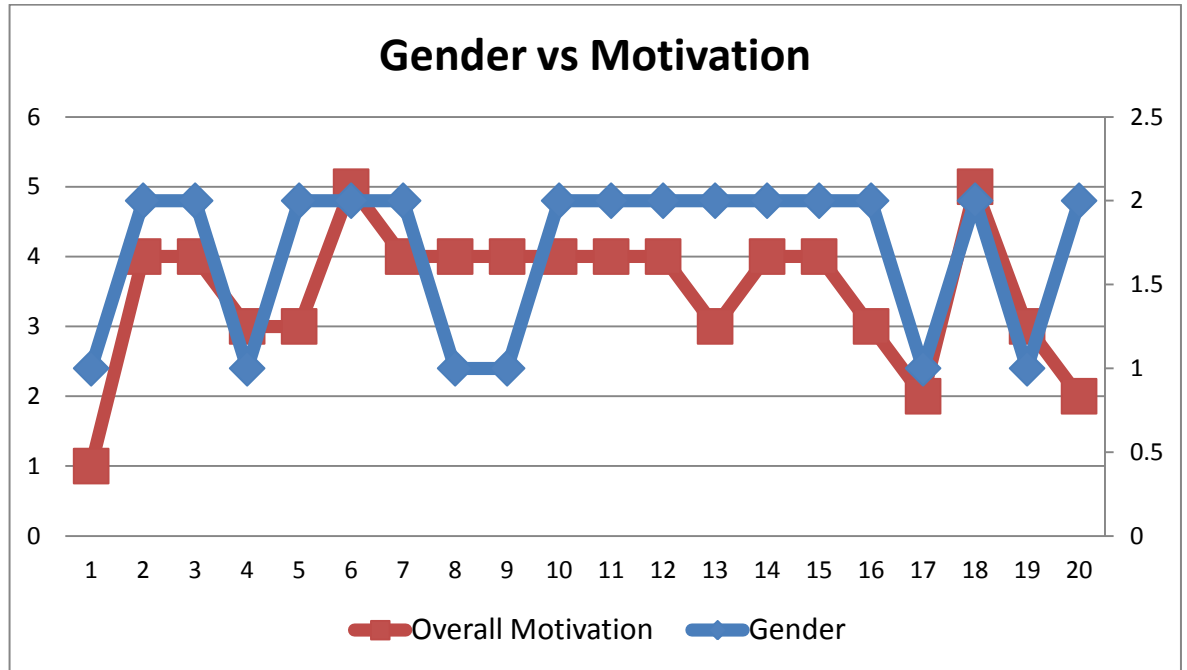


Figure 8. Gender versus general motivation level. There is clearly a correlation visible, though not very strong. On the right hand axis 1 = MALE and 2 = FEMALE.

Figure 8 shows that the genders affect to the overall motivations seems to play a role. The correlation is not extremely strong (correlation factor = 0,45) but moderate (Attachment 4). Thus, it is necessary to take gender into account in formulating suggestions to improve motivation. The graph shows that female subjects have higher level of motivation in general. Male have lower. Thus, more emphasis must be on increasing the male member motivation.

The male subjects expressed their thoughts on the question of how to improve the motivation level in AIESEC HAAGA- HELIA with, for example, following statements: “People having clear responsibilities /roles of responsibility or people understanding the why of AIESEC” and “More individual help / management system”.

Thus, it points out that the male members would probably require tasks better suited for their individual talents, and more ways to help to improve their personal skills, not only on general level. Males tend to pay more attention on their personal development rather than work for the benefit for the whole organization, even if that is of course also important for dedicated members. However, since AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA has limited resources, arranging individual training is difficult. Therefore, the emphasis should be again on distributing the work tasks correctly. The question about factors of motivation deficiency for males is quite similar compared to female subjects. “Not seeing results, feelings like others don’t pull their weight” is a type of an answer which tells about the lack of feedback and, in some cases, lack of trust to co-workers. This being noted, even more weight should be on the feedback (and perhaps rewarding good work) and also improvements on leader level actions on ‘getting the job done’ in a manner of speaking. This kind of motivation shortage can easily create a circle of mistrust that affects negatively the contribution of a member, which the again decreases the motivation of others.

Calculated from the data, gender and feedback satisfaction only have correlation factor of 0,22. This is very weak correlation and implies that the earlier stated male low motivation is not due to inferior (or unsatisfactory) feedback level for male members. Thus, it can be safely concluded that the way to increase the overall motivation is to provide generally better feedback to all members.

There is also a small correlation between gender and amount of positive challenge. Even if the correlation is not strong, it is considerable (correlation factor = 0,44). In this case, male subjects feel less challenged than female subjects. Thus, to improve male motivation, it might be feasible to study and attune tasks and responsibilities to suit male and female needs as much as it is possible in AIESEC context.

Correlation between feedback and motivation

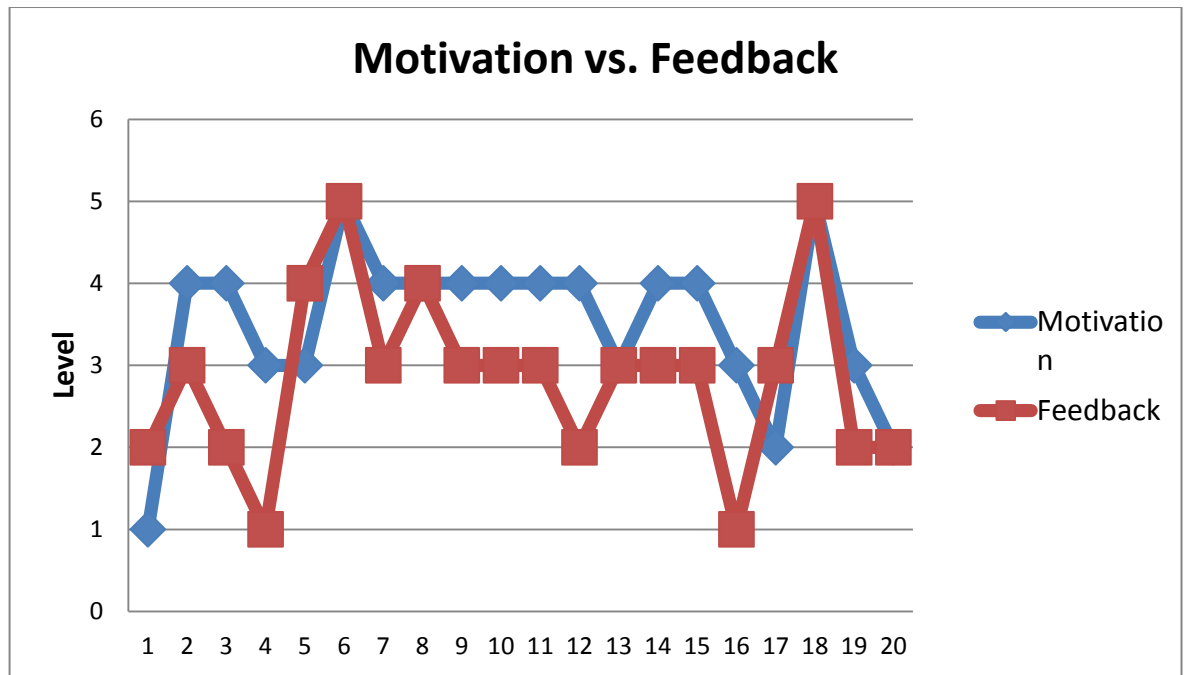


Figure 9. Motivation versus Feedback satisfaction. Correlation clearly visible.

As expected, the correlation between the motivation level and satisfaction to received feedback is relatively strong (correlation factor = 0,56). This can also be observed in figure 9. This proves the point from the Flow theory that it is necessary to provide feedback for members work to keep their motivation level high. From this result it can be said with high confidence that the AIESEC leadership should focus on providing more feedback to the members. In principle, this is not a challenging task, but it demands a lot of effort since the feedback should be carefully considered. Furthermore, this will reflect on the level of individual challenge. It negative feedback is too often necessary; the tasks of the individual should be rechecked and brought to a correct level according to the skills.

It can be further stated in this chapter that work time in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and the level of motivation have actually a small negative value of correlation (correlation factor = -0,16). In practice, the negative value means that the longer person worked in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA, the less motivated he/she is. However, the absolute value is so small that in this context it is negligible. Thus, it can be concluded that work time does not affect the level of motivation. This is actually logically ex-

pected since typically least motivated members quit fast and hence do not make contribution to the results of this survey.

To take an actual example from the written feedback in the survey, a member states: “People don't see results/results are not coming despite of working hard.” Another member shortly wrote: “Don’t see any achievements or success”. This in despite, that actually the local committee, in which the author belongs to and which is the focus group of this work, there has been enormous growth in success. This again stresses the point that the members absolutely need to get the (positive) feedback and information on the contribution of their work.

Correlation between challenge and motivation

Another matter of great interest is the effect of challenge on motivation. This could be expected to have a high impact. Challenge and motivation are often closely related to each other especially in case of volunteer work.

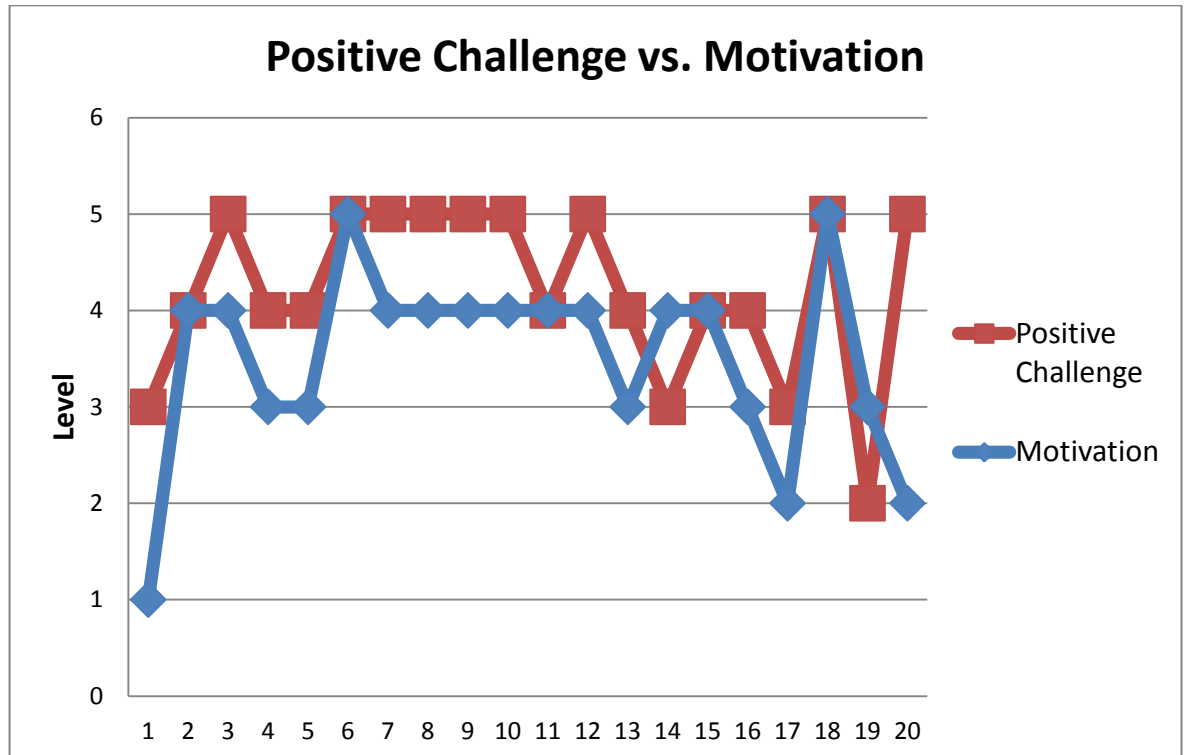


Figure 10. Positive challenge versus Motivation. The correlation is clearly strong.

It can be seen from figure 10 that the motivation clearly depends on the amount of positive challenge. The correlation factor is 0,53 which is relatively strong inside survey group of 20 persons. The positive challenge level average is very high in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA according to the results and it is clearly one of the key factors keeping the average motivation at its' current level. It is therefore recommended by the author that the amount of positive challenge could further be increased. This has to be done together with feedback from both leaders to members and vice versa. There is always a danger of exceeding the limits of what is still considered positive and every individual experiences things differently. For example, a statistical database could be maintained and updated frequently to individually estimate the skill level of individuals.

Correlation between support and motivation

It is important to study the effect of support on motivation. Very often, probably most of the time, support is needed to keep up learning and team spirit. In this case peer-to-peer support was studied.

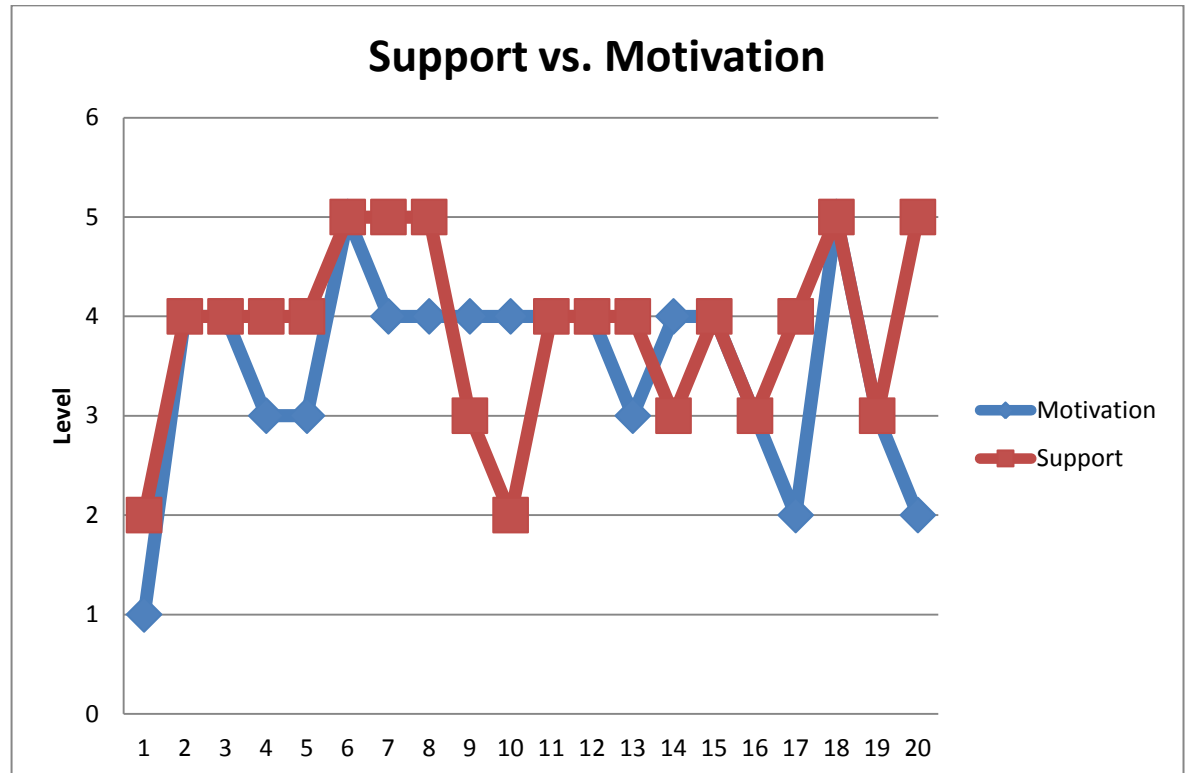


Figure 11. Motivation level versus the members' satisfaction on received support. There is some correlation although not as high as expected.

The relation between peer-to-peer support and motivation has some value. It clearly shows (see figure 11) that the support is necessary. However, the effect is not as high as could maybe be expected. In this case the correlation factor is only 0,37, which is not very high. But it still has an impact. Perhaps the key factor would have been leader-to-member support which is out of the scope of this work. Nevertheless, support is needed in groups, even if the members are highly trained professionals. In case of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA, people are on their way in life, gathering experiences and learning. Mentoring and coaching speed up the learning process.

It is the authors' belief that the most support is needed for the new members. These people are not accustomed to the working habits of the AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and do not personally yet know older members well. The suggestion is that the new members should be carefully introduced to the society of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA through motivating learning and right amount of social activity. If the motivation level can be built up high in the beginning, it is more likely to stay high later. To quote a member: "I would encourage even more the culture of learning not only by doing, but also from what has been done before. Use what expertise there already exists in the organization to teach others...".

Motivation level inside the teams

The closest "family" a member of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA has is his/her team. The average results above show the motivation level to be roughly the same for AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA in general and for personal AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA teams. It is the author's opinion that the feeling for the general motivation of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA for a member reflects mainly the motivation of his/her team, which explains the very similar average results. The team is the core and the other parts of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA are not as close. This is best explained with the systems theory where the group inside a group forms its' own boundaries being an organism part of a larger organism. Metaphorically speaking, if the heart feels good, it tends to think that the whole body feels good.



Figure 12. Each team member is important in creating the total output. (PDU 4 PMP 2012)

However, it cannot be denied that the motivation is also a general thing reflection the whole organization of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA with its' methods and habits. Therefore, the similarities in team motivation and overall motivation can be also partially results of the whole organization and not the other way around. Just to mention, the correlation factor between team motivation and general motivation is only 0,07. This indicates, at least within the research group in question, that the “outside AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA” (meaning the larger organization around the team) does not affect the motivation inside the team. This can be interpreted as a good things and bad thing. Good is the fact that the teams can build up their inner motivation themselves and it is up to them to keep working efficiently. Bad is that in case of “infected” teams, it is highly difficult for an outside source to take action to fix the situation. In the authors personal experience this is just the case. The team (in which the author belongs to) is working well, functional, growing and relatively happy. Many other teams encountered have much more trouble keeping themselves running, and many have a shortage of members.

Conflict theory predicts that competition is a normal part of group activity. Moreover, mixed with ideas of the systems theory, groups within groups must undergo certain kinds of conflicts. There are disagreements between members just like in everyday life. There are obstacles between different groups, e.g., Local Committees of AIESEC. Sometimes there can be misunderstandings and disagreements between leader board and members. Based on some written feedback from the survey, there are members that do not fully trust in the flow of information and ability to make correct decisions. For example, a direct quotation from the survey: “Being left out from the information channels (what member hears vs. what we communicate to our Team Leaders), competition between the Local Committees, bad relations between Helsinki Local Committees, unfair treatment coming from the Member Committee” when asked what is the reason for de-motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. Another quote about the same topic says: “We should be more transparent”. In other words, the members should be able to see the actions of the leadership and understand why some decisions are made as they are. This could be a way to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts and provide a channel for feedback for both directions, not only from top to bottom. “The collective action must arise from living experiences shared by individuals who are willing to work together to address a common problem” as is stated in the empowerment theory.

Position, challenge and learning

Since the levels of satisfaction for positive challenges and opportunities for learning were rated so high, it is of interest to compare them. To put this in a form of a question: “Does the positive challenge encourage learning in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA or vice versa?” From the author’s experience and from various psychological theories the answer is yes. By creating positive challenge, the individuals can have more opportunities to learn. Lack of challenge will disrupt the Flow and lead to boredom. Too much challenge creates stress. The correlation factor indeed is at least moderate 0,51. I.e., persons who feel challenged also experience that they have more learning opportunities.

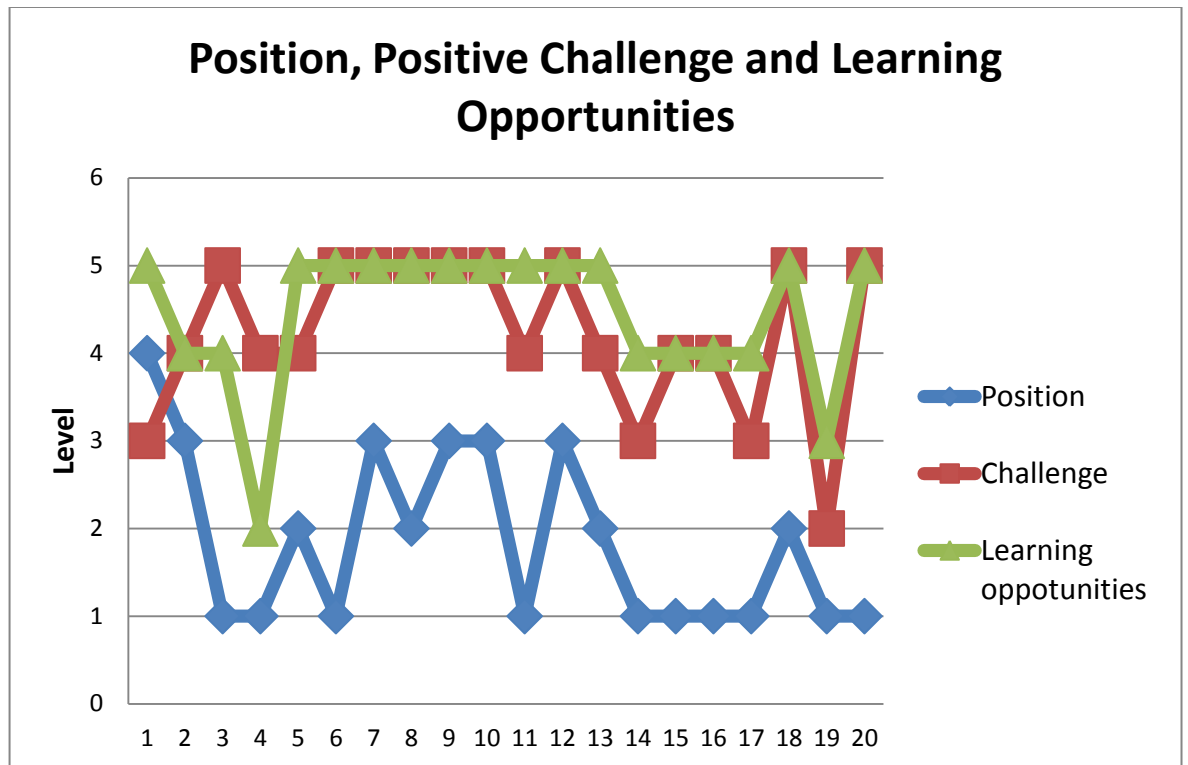


Figure 13. Levels of positive challenge, learning opportunities and position of the subjects. High levels of both challenge and learning can be seen.

As it can be seen from figure 13, the positive challenge and the learning opportunities are indeed rated high on average. For the sake of interest, the subject position in AIE-SEC has also been plotted. Here 1 = team member, 2 = team leader, 3 = executive board and 4 = board member. It can be seen that the position slightly affects the way the member feels about his/her opportunities and challenge. The normal team members seem to have the lowest score for both. This could be expected since the level of challenge grows with responsibility. The higher the position, the more demanding the tasks are thus creating more opportunities to learn. Obviously, this is analogous with, e.g., simple elementary school where children need to start from the basics to advance and the challenge in the beginning typically is not great.

4 Discussion, analysis and suggestions

Firstly, not to be too pessimistic about the motivational status of AIESEC, a quotation can be displayed: “There is no de-motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA in my opinion. I am a member of the sales team and sometimes when calls do not go the way I wanted them to, I feel a little down. I also know that it does not have anything to do with AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA but the people themselves.” Some people handle stress better than others and have been probably assigned to a correct position with right amount of challenge and responsibility. As mentioned earlier, the local committee of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA seems to be in much better shape in general than other local committees the author has encountered inside Finland and even abroad. From the earlier member: “The motivation is already very high in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA and I think it is because the people are very motivated and they strive for the very best. The people in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA are always there to help you and support you!” The positive results are reflected best on the levels of the opportunities of learning and positive challenge. In the authors’ opinion, these are the driving force keeping the motivation level on its current level.

An apparent main point from the results above is the following: There is a lack of feedback, which manifests as de-motivation, when the members do not see the benefits and accomplishments of their contribution. Some want the feedback in form of rewards, others in information. Most people want to see how the organization does better when they add to its’ activities. “Team activities, workshops sharing knowledge between different teams, speeches delivered by alumni or Member Committee, competition and rewards, etc” was written by a member who quite well summarizes what kind of activities and matters could be used to improve the motivation. The emphasis is again on the feedback.

The survey results point out that the Flow, described in chapter 2.7, has been at least partially broken in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. According to the theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), the level of motivation increases when the challenge meets the skills. The second factor leading to successful state of flow is exactly the feedback that AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA lacks. Moreover, as mentioned in the chapter 2.4 describing the systems theory, “goodness of fit” is created with help of others. Without proper feedback, which is often the essence of help and learning, this goodness cannot exist. The empowerment theory emphasizes on collective action being the only way to create change and positive results. When the Flow and the “goodness of fit” are missing, the collective action creating change and results easily disappears.

As it has been obvious through this whole work, the largest decrease in motivation comes from the lack of the Flow of information, more specifically feedback. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to create a system or method providing the option for feedback working in both directions. The way from top to bottom is typically easier. The group leaders and higher level leaders need to arrange sessions for individual feedback in regular basis. The emphasis is on individual feedback since this helps to create more trust between members and leadership and focus on individual needs. This was especially true on male subjects.

In general, in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA, currently used type of provided feedback is different kinds or awards. See figure 14 for an example of a “team leader award”. This habit is good and should be continued. It provides satisfaction for the awarded and (see conflict theory) if balanced correctly can increase the efforts of members. However, this does not provide for the whole group regularly.

Moreover, since the results indicated very good satisfaction for the possibilities for learning and for the level of positive challenge in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA, this knowledge could be taken into use. This can be further encouraged in the individual feedback sessions. The members can be asked for their own ideas of improvements for their own work and be given opportunities to implement those ideas. Giving freedom of choice can often act as a way of learning and self-esteem builder.

For the case of feedback from bottom to up, a constructive system needs to be created. The system should be anonymous (unless the member insists otherwise) and it should be taken seriously. This means that there would be arranged sessions, perhaps monthly, where the feedback from members to leadership would be summarized and the actions planned based on it. For this system to work, the members need to be able to see that the feedback is actually taken seriously and considered as best as possible. Of course, not every request can be implemented but it is the authors' opinion that the visibility would already improve the motivation level.

Lastly, the author would like to suggest a yearly status update of the situation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA of similar nature to this work. In other words, a yearly survey could be conducted and the possible improvements and deteriorations could be analyzed and discussed in comparison with the previous year's results. This would give information on the correctness of the strategies implemented and help to modify the parts which seem to be incorrect. As the survey in this work shows, the workload is not overwhelming and the main points are very clear only from the simple average values.

5 Conclusions

In this work, the motivation in voluntary organization AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA was studied. The theoretical framework was first established focusing on motivation in voluntary organizations and on the methods of keeping the motivation high. The method to gather data was a survey consisting of a number of questions related to level of motivation and satisfaction. Furthermore, the survey had space for free word on the ways to improve the motivation and what are the main factors for lack of motivation. The results were analyzed together with the theories.

Based on the results, the general motivation level was slightly above the questionnaire average of three, implicating a satisfactory basic level of motivation. However, especially in case of voluntary organization that relies on member commitment, this level should be increased. The largest reason for de-motivation was found out to be the lack of feedback and transparency. The members feel that they cannot see the results of their work and that their contribution is not appreciated. Clearly the flow of information has been obstructed in the organization.

Based on the analysis, suggestions to improve the situation with the information flow, support and feedback were formulated. To summarize, the feedback needs to work both ways and it needs to be individual and frequent enough. Male members seem to need slightly more attention than the female members. Also, new members might require slightly more challenge and support than then currently receive. It is the authors' opinion that implementing these strategies would increase the level of motivation and thus productivity of the whole organization. The Flow of the individuals and the organization would be improved.

In general, conducting this study was a great way to gather a real concrete data on the current status of AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA motivation. Some of the results were surprising, others were expected. This work proves that even though the feeling of a high

team spirit, as AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA has, there are often hidden aspects that do not easily come to light. The symptoms of lack of motivation have been noticed before for some members but the reason was unclear before.

The main value of this research is to provide essential data about the motivation level and factors contributing to it in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. In other words, this research provides a way to study “what motivates students to work for AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA” and what are the obstacles the organization needs to overcome. Moreover, the research provides ways to improve the current situation.

Personally the author has learned a lot while conducting the surveys, analyzing data, talking with people and formulating suggestions using the gathered information. From professional point of view author learned the key points of members not being satisfied with current work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. Moreover, the author found new ideas of how to improve the morale at the working place. This experience will help the author to develop professionalism in work of human resource field by giving insight to the motivational concepts and aspects of an organization.

Working experiences from AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA can be implemented in professional career in non-volunteer based workplace. The theories used in this work seem to apply mostly to any kind of organization. Especially the concept of “The Flow” seems to apply both in group and individual level. All in all, the experience gained from this research will certainly be beneficial in many future challenges.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. The survey form

This is AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA survey to collect information about current motivation level in Local Committee.

1. Sex

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. Your work time in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA

☐ 0 - 6 months

☐ 6 - 12 months

☐ 1 - 1,5 years

☐ 1,5 - 2 years

☐ more than 2 years


3. Your position in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA

☐ Team Member

☐ Team Leader

☐ Executive Board

☐ Board



This is AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA survey to collect information about current motivation level in Local Committee.

4. The overall motivation in AIESEC is good *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

5. I feel I get enough support from other AIESECers *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

6. I have enough positive challenge in my work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

7. The overall motivation in my AIESEC team is good *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

8. I feel I get enough feedback for my work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

9. There are plenty of opportunities for learning in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

This is AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA survey to collect information about current motivation level in Local Committee.

10. What could improve motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA?

1000 characters remaining

11. What is the reason for demotivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA?

1000 characters remaining

Attachment 2. Survey results

Person	Sex	Your work time in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA	Your position in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA	The overall motivation in AIESEC is good	I feel I get enough support from other AIESECers	I have enough positive challenge in my work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA.	The overall motivation in my AIESEC team is good	I feel I get enough feedback for my work in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA	There are plenty of opportunities for learning in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA
a	1	5	4	1	2	3	5	2	5
b	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4
c	2	1	1	4	4	5	3	2	4
d	1	1	1	3	4	4	4	1	2
e	2	1	2	3	4	4	4	4	5
f	2	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	5
g	2	4	3	4	5	5	4	3	5
h	1	1	2	4	5	5	4	4	5
i	1	5	3	4	3	5	5	3	5
j	2	3	3	4	2	5	2	3	5
k	2	2	1	4	4	4	3	3	5
l	2	5	3	4	4	5	4	2	5
m	2	1	2	3	4	4	4	3	5
n	2	1	1	4	3	3	3	3	4
o	2	2	1	4	4	4	5	3	4
p	2	1	1	3	3	4	2	1	4
q	1	2	1	2	4	3	3	3	4
r	2	1	2	5	5	5	4	5	5
s	1	1	1	3	3	2	1	2	3
t	2	2	1	2	5	5	4	2	5
Average		2.15	1.85	3.5	3.85	4.2	3.65	2.85	4.45
Deviation	0.47	1.496487	0.988087	1	0.933302	0.894427	1.089423	1.089423	0.825578
	1 = Male	1 = 0 - 6 months	1 = Team Member						
	2 = Female	2 = 6 - 12 months	2 = Team Leader						
		3 = 1 - 1,5 years	3 = Executive Board						
		4 = 1,5 - 2 years	4 = Board						
		5 = more than 2 years							

Attachment 3. Survey free word

What could improve motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA?	What is the reason for demotivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA?
-	-
I would encourage even more the culture of learning not only by doing, but also from what has been done before. Use what expertise there already exists in the organisation to teach others...	The main demotivator for me has been the LCs tendency to repeat the same mistakes again and again. This is direct results of loss of knowledge at end of term/project, due change of personnel. It also has been clear that the approach to learning we cultivate, hinders learning from the past mistakes.
Better follow-up of member development, more team building initiatives	not understanding the "why" of the work done
Team activities, workshops sharing knowledge between different teams, speeches delivered by alumni or MC, competition and rewards, etc	Working as a volunteer student makes the whole impression of Aiesec unprofessional Failures and people's slacking and acting lazy The lack of member in a team means that you always have to do more than just your area makes you learn more but unable to focus on a certain field
We should be more transparent	
If people see what they get out of working so much. If team leaders were well educated, they could motivate and organize their team better.	People don't see results/results are not coming despite of working hard.
The motivation is already very high in aiesec haaga-helia and i think it is because the people are very motivated and they strive for the very best. The people in Aiesec Haaga-Helia are always there to help you and support you!	There is no demotivation in Aiesec Haaga-Helia in my opinion. I am a memebr of the sales team and sometimes when calls do not go the way I wanted them to, I feel a little down. I also know that if does not have anything to with Aiesec but the people themselves.

What could improve motivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA?	What is the reason for demotivation in AIESEC HAAGA-HELIA?
More individual help / management system	Dont see any achievements or success
Not to have another job to do :(More interesting projects (like hero)	Weird pushing for selling, or then the whole idea for need to get the money through selling.
More whole group get togethers!!!	people that are not motivated or just not doing attending at all
Transparency between the functional areas, Office hours are super cool! Sharing more information about what's going on in the FAs, no idea what's going on in iGIP or OGX....	Being left out from the information channels (what member hears vs. what we communicate to our TLs), competition between the LCs, bad relations between Helsinki LCs, unfair treatment coming from the MC
Seeing results for your own work, being continuously challenged with new and exciting work	Not seeing results, feeling like others don't pull their weight
People having clear responsibilities /roles of responsibility or people understanding the why of AIESEC	People not keeping their promises. People don't see the value of their work
Support of the EB, more effort to motivate new members	No support
Results	Not feeling responsibility and ownership
People should clearly see the outcome of their work. They should also get feedback and do self-evaluation. There should be all the time opportunities to develop and we should understand people's personal motivation to do voluntary job.	People, who don't keep their promises. Things not moving forward; not seeing the progress. Unactive team.
	people who are not committed to do their part
Competition	Time consuming
Reward	Inefficient in planning.

Attachment 4. Correlation coefficients

<i>Table IX</i> Interpretation of the strength of correlation results	
Correlation coefficient range	Strength of correlation
0.00-0.30	Weak
0.31-0.50	Moderate
0.51-0.80	Strong
0.81-1.00	Very strong

Figure 7. Correlation factors interpretations. (SciELO)